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The President's Daily Brief

September 27, 1976



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

September 27, 1976

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USSR: *The Supreme Soviet will meet in Moscow on October 27, primarily to approve the final version of the new five-year plan (1976-1980).*

The announcement of a date for the session suggests that Premier Kosygin is well enough to participate. He customarily would address the meeting and present the economic plan. General Secretary Brezhnev told Averill Harriman last week that Kosygin would be returning to work "in several weeks."

A meeting of the party Central Committee is expected to precede the session of the Supreme Soviet to put the party's stamp of approval on the economic plan and possibly to make some changes in the top leadership. Nikolay Tikhonov, who recently was appointed a first deputy premier, presumably to help lighten the workload of the ailing Kosygin, possibly will be given Politburo status. Such an elevation would put him on a par with Kirill Mazurov, the other first deputy premier.

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MBFR: *In the tenth round of the force reduction talks in Vienna, opening this week, the Allies may try to focus the discussions initially on how the Warsaw Pact counts its forces.*

In the last round, the Pact, for the first time, provided data on the size of its forces in Central Europe, which were lower than NATO estimates. Western observers believe that the Pact counts only combat forces rather than all uniformed personnel as the West does.

Paris' refusal to allow French forces in Germany to be included in Western totals is the principal reason why the Allies may try to focus on the rules the Pact has employed in counting its forces rather than presenting data on their own forces when the session opens.

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The French position also has led to differences among the Allies. The Belgians do not want to include French forces in the totals and believe the discussions on the size of the forces should begin whether or not the Allies agree on the French question. The British and Dutch favor this approach.

The West Germans insist that French forces must be included in the Western figures if the concept of a common ceiling is to be maintained. They believe that the active NATO participants in the talks should agree to balance any changes in the French force levels in Germany with adjustments in their own force levels. The Germans are willing to exclude France from any obligations that might arise from the talks in Vienna.

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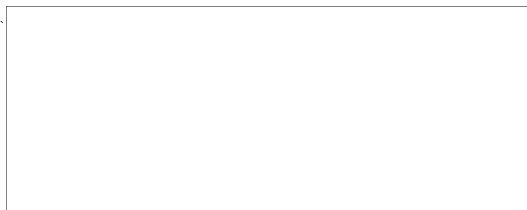
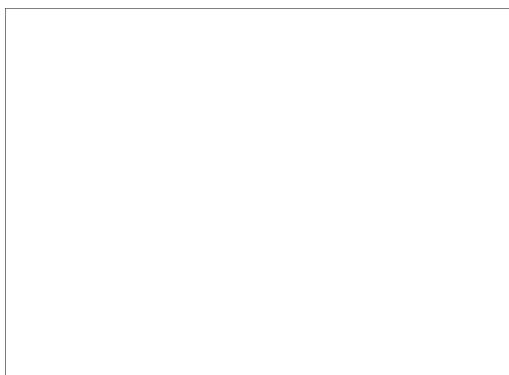
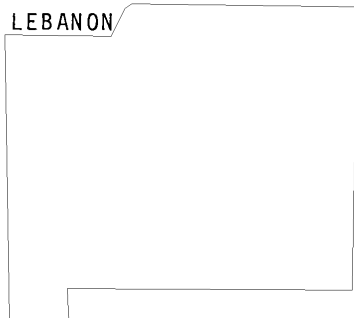
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LEBANON



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The Lebanese leftists remain inflexible on the question of withdrawal.

In a statement over the weekend, leftist leader Kamal Jumblatt emphasized that Palestinian and leftist withdrawal from the Mount Lebanon area could take place only in the context of a "comprehensive political solution." It would have to include the withdrawal of Syrian forces from Lebanon and the pullback of Christian troops from Muslim villages in the northern mountains.

In a remark clearly pointed at Arafat, Jumblatt stated that "no one" has the right to talk about withdrawal from Mount Lebanon or "raise any other issue" without reference to the Lebanese left.

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PANAMA: *Government strongman Omar Torrijos is now facing his most serious domestic problems since he consolidated his hold on power in 1969.*

His recent performance, particularly his failure to deal effectively with the demonstrations that rocked Panama in the past two weeks, probably has reduced his popularity to an all-time low. The student-incited protests reflect this along with the government's deepening economic difficulties. Torrijos has long viewed students as among his principal partners.

The National Guard, which Torrijos commands and which is the only force capable of removing him from

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office, lined up solidly behind him in previous crises. Now, for the first time, some of his actions are being criticized.

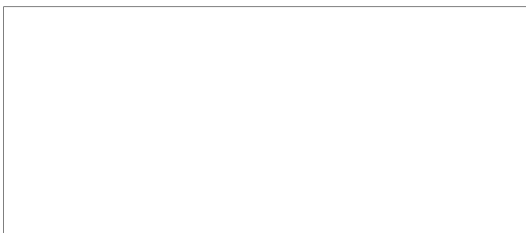
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The top officers in the National Guard do not appear as yet to have seriously considered alternatives to Torrijos.

These leaders are men who threw in their lot with Torrijos at the time of an abortive coup attempt in 1969 and hold their positions because of their demonstrated loyalty to him. They probably are still confident they can ride out the difficulties with Torrijos at the helm. They are ambitious, however, and could be ruthless.

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Torrijos' ability to negotiate a new canal treaty with the US also is being questioned.

After nearly eight years in power, the general is still promising that "next year" a pact will be signed. Radicals argue that Torrijos would have to sell out Panama's interests in order to secure an accord.

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Torrijos has believed a new canal treaty would ensure his political future. It is now increasingly apparent, however, that in the absence of success on the canal issue his management of the slumping economy and the domestic political situation will be critical. His home audience is now less willing to be distracted by his unproductive international performances.

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North Korea

Scandinavia

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